



(Photo by Sgt. Nicole Kojetin 1st Cav. Public Affairs)

Hot, hot, hot!

Spc. Erik Gonzalez tries to cool off during a clearing operation May 10 in West Rashid, a southern district of Baghdad. The Sun Valley, Texas native and his comrades from Company C, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment spent the day searching for weapons caches and insurgents. (See story page 4)

1st Cav Soldier's remains returned to Fort Hood

By Amanda Kim Stairrett
Killeen Daily Herald

WEST FORT HOOD, Texas - "God, you were supposed to take care of him!"

The pain in Donna Kiernan's voice pierced the silence at Robert Gray Army Airfield on Monday afternoon as a flag-draped casket containing her husband's body was carried to a waiting

hearse.

"You're my hero, Christopher," she yelled between mournful wails.

"I love you!"

"I'm so angry!"

Staff Sgt. Christopher S. Kiernan was killed by a sniper on May 6 in Baghdad. The 37-year-old served with the 1st Cavalry Division's 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade

Combat Team. He joined the military in March 1990 as an armor crewmember. He served tours during Desert Storm and later, Bosnia, where he earned a Purple Heart, and in Haiti and Somalia. Chris deployed in 2004 to Iraq, where he earned a Bronze Star. He had been with the battalion since September 2005, and deployed with it to Iraq in

October 2006.

Chris is the first Fort Hood Soldier killed in action whose remains were flown directly to Fort Hood. Before a January policy change, Texas Soldiers' remains were flown from Dover Air Force Base in Delaware to Dallas or Austin. Now remains will be

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Soldiers help heal Iraqi boy with second-degree burns

By Spc. Jeffrey Ledesma
1st Cav. Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - Multi-National Division - Baghdad Soldiers provided healthcare to a badly burned Iraqi boy in northern Baghdad May 9.

Elements of 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division out of Fort Hood, Texas, were conducting operations near the town of Muhammad al'Abbas when they were approached by a local woman requesting medical aid for her three-year-old son.

Second-degree burns caused during an accident involving hot water two days prior covered the child's face, head, shoulders, chest and arms. Although the medic on the scene attempted to help, due to the extent of the injuries, the child was evacuated to the Muleskiner Clinic ran by Company C, 115th



(U.S. Army photo)

Maj. Joseph Johnson, the brigade surgeon with the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, stabilizes an Iraqi boy who came in with second-degree burns to his face, shoulders and chest from an accident involving hot water as his mother watches by his bedside at the Muleskiner Clinic at Camp Taji, Iraq, May 9.

Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, where he was treated and stabilized.

Maj. Joseph Johnson, a

native of Miami, the brigade surgeon with 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, said when the child

arrived he was in no immediate danger, but quickly started fluid resuscitation and pain medication to ease the boy's suffering.

After dressing the burns and stabilized the boy was transferred to the Coalition Military Assistance Training Team (CMATT) clinic.

The CMATT clinic is manned by a 54-person Iraqi medical staff and two Iraqi physicians. Coalition forces provide assistance and mentoring to the Iraqi staff there.

Soldiers with the Iraqi Army will later transfer the child to the Kadamiyah Hospital where he will continue his recovery.

"The care he received is a tribute to the joint efforts of the skilled medical providers, nurses and medics of Company C, 115th BSB, Company C, 407th BSB and the 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division," said Johnson.

Arabic Phrase of the Day

azwiya

**Defined:
lights**

Iraq 3-Day Weather Report



Today

High: 101
Low: 76



Tomorrow

High: 102
Low: 77



Friday

High: 102
Low: 78

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Family, friends gather at Fort Hood for burial of fallen hero

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flown to a regional airport with 5,000 feet of runway nearest the family's home, said Lee Price, chief of Fort Hood's Casualty Assistance Center. The Kiernans lived in Killeen. The change will ensure that families will have to travel less and that complete honors are provided for each Soldier, Price said.

Before her husband's remains arrived on Monday, Donna read an e-mail Chris sent her shortly before his death, titled "The past six months in Baghdad." In it, he talked about the situation in Iraq and policies proposed by lawmakers. He slammed elected officials for passing a bill that provided a timeline for the

withdrawal of troops from Iraq. He asked his wife to forward it to everyone they knew, but asked it not be passed on to members of the media because his words would be misconstrued.

He also wrote about the people of Iraq and how the troops must build their trust. He said the withdrawal timeline tells these people that the Americans are leaving and never coming back.

"These people will never forgive us," Chris wrote.

Donna went on to say that American Soldiers need help and without additional troop support, more "will pay with their blood and their lives." Chris did just that, she said, and the Soldiers in his unit were hurting. She knows many who are on their second and third deployments, and the



(Photos by Steve Traylor, Killeen Daily Herald)

Family members and Soldiers from the 1st Cavalry Division console Donna Kiernan (center) as she is escorted to the tarmac to view the casket of her husband, Staff Sgt. Christopher S. Kiernan, at the Robert Gray Army Airfield at West Fort Hood May 14.

ones who are in Iraq are exhausted and fatigued.

Chris' death means it's time for politicians to stop taking vacations and get to

work, Donna said adamantly. They need to work 18-hour days, sleep four hours and then go back out for another day like the soldiers are doing in Iraq, she added.

During training, the "gloves are off," Donna said, but in battle the Soldiers are held back and "must be proper while the cowardly so-called insurgents use their religious mosque to hide out and build weapon caches.

"The insurgents are upgrading their weapons and experience," she said. "They want to kill American Soldiers." She put responsibility on the Iraqi people, saying it is time for them to be held accountable for meeting deadlines set by the American government.

"It's time for the Iraqis to take charge of their own country and take responsibility if they fail to meet the deadlines they are supposed to meet," she said.



1st Cavalry Division Soldiers carry the casket of Staff Sgt. Christopher Kiernan, a First Team Soldier who was killed in Iraq May 6, past the division's honor guard at Robert Gray Army Airfield May 14.

Stryker troops keep clearing

By Sgt. Nicole Kojetin
1st Cav. Public Affairs

BAGHDAD - "Ugh! It's real hot. It's like being in an oven," said Spc. Erik Gonzalez from Sun Valley, Texas May 10 in a brief pause from guzzling water.

He was tucked under a little tree taking advantage the small amount of shade, not caring that he was kneeling right next to a thorn bush. Gonzalez and his comrades from Company C, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division were on hour five of a clearing operation in Baghdad's western Rashid District and were trying to take a break from the sun.

"(You have to) drink a lot of water and put water on your body to keep yourself cool," Gonzales said. "It doesn't really work that well, though."

Their eyes were focused searching for any threats, but no one could deny the constant pressure of the 100-degree weather, especially since they are on the last day of Operation Arrowhead Strike 10 in support of the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division's Operation Dragon Fire West and were all pouring sweat.

"Let's go!" someone yells in the distance.

Gonzales sighs and pours some more cool water down the collar of his body armor and moves out.

"Did you go into a coma last night?" a Soldier asked in passing as he walked. "I know I did. I will tonight, too. It sucks out here."

All of them would rather be operating in the palm groves, where they started their day, as



(Photo by Sgt. Nicole Kojetin 1st Cav. Public Affairs)

Soldiers with Company C, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment make their way back to the street after searching a palm grove in West Rashid, a southwest area of the Iraqi capital May 10. The Soldiers were able to detain an insurgent after the long day in the sun.

the trudge across the field with the sun on their backs.

"It's actually a lot cooler because you are walking in the shade all day," said Capt. Isaac Torres, the commander of the Comanche Company. "It is just a lot of intensive searching with metal detectors and poles in the ground and having to clear little by little."

Lt. Col. Fred Johnson, the deputy commander of the brigade originally from Centralia Ill., asked Torres what he could do to help when he was checking on his Soldiers.

"Keep pushing the purchases of the (air conditioning) for the vehicles. We currently only have four vehicles with A/C right now," Torres said.

The Soldiers jokingly call the Strykers the green "oven" because of how hot it is inside. Torres knows first-hand how bad it is. He is in the same boat.

"The guys are physically

and mentally done at 12 p.m. in these temperatures. After that, I tell them to take a lot of breaks and to take your time," he said.

"Towards the end of the day yesterday, we had contact and were maneuvering on someone and almost had two guys fall into heat exhaustion," he said.

The Soldiers won't stop until the mission is done, though, leaving no drawer unopened or leaf unturned.

In the middle of the afternoon, an hour prior to the scheduled time to go home, they receive the word that there is a "bad guy" in the area and the current operation comes to a screeching halt.

The Soldiers wait patiently in their "green ovens" for their moment to strike. When they get the word, the sun is forgotten and Soldiers sprint from house to house searching a four block area until they find the

man they are looking for with some of his associates.

Cheers echo of the desolate street as the sweat covered Soldiers learn they got their man.

"We did really well. It was a combined effort," said Torres.

"We would have knocked off a few hours ago if it wasn't for these guys," said Col. Steve Townsend, the 3rd SBCT commander from Griffen, Ga., as he pointed at the flex-cuffed insurgents. "I am very proud of my Soldiers today ... they were so determined to not let this guy get away."

With a renewed sense of purpose and a new disregard of the heat, his Soldiers asked, "What's next?"

With a big smile, Torres replies, "We are going home."

And after 13 hours of searching, they headed back to Camp Liberty for a much-needed break.